

## New Sneakers Donated for US Soldiers in Afghanistan



*Kym Jennings (right) of the JC Penney store at Roosevelt Field presents Ken Erickson of Brookhaven Lab's Adopt-a-Platoon program with 32 pairs of new sneakers, which will be delivered next month to U.S. soldiers stationed in Afghanistan.*

The members of U.S. Army reconnaissance platoon 1-26IN will be able to run faster and jump higher next month. On February 13, the JC Penney department store of Roosevelt Field donated 32 pairs of new sneakers to the soldiers through the [local chapter](#) of the Adopt-a-Platoon program, which is based at Brookhaven National Laboratory.

"We are so grateful for the donation from JC Penney, and the sneakers will go directly to soldiers in the front lines," said Ken Erickson, a Ridge resident and Brookhaven Lab employee who heads the local Adopt-a-Platoon chapter. "Most of these soldiers in the platoon are about 19 years old and they're somebody's kids. We want to do whatever we can to boost their morale and make them comfortable while they're there."

The sneakers are scheduled to arrive in the Middle East next month and will then be delivered via helicopter to the soldiers who are stationed in the mountains of Afghanistan. While the platoon originally requested 32 pairs of sneakers (one for each soldier), only 29 will be used. Since the original request, two members of the platoon have been killed and one has been injured.

Adopt-a-Platoon Soldier Support Effort is a national nonprofit organization that helps civilians to "adopt" a soldier or an entire platoon of soldiers by providing them with letters and items that they request including winter boots, shaving razors, magazines, snacks, and even backup generators. Adopt-a-Platoon accepts supplies and financial donations from individuals as well as local, regional, and national businesses.

The Brookhaven Veterans Association's Adopt-a-Platoon committee has supported several platoons as well as deployed BNL employees and their children since its inception two years ago. Anyone who would like to adopt a soldier or a platoon, or contribute to the Adopt-a-Platoon program should contact Ken Erickson at [erickson@bnl.gov](mailto:erickson@bnl.gov).